

Minutes, Public Works Committee
Meeting Tuesday, February 6, 7:00

Attending: Michael Cann, Rob Crowner (chair), Don George, Charlie Moran, Vince O'Connor; Guilford Mooring; Walter Wolnik.

1. Approval of Minutes

Moved: to approve the minutes of the meetings of June 6, 2006; July 19, 2006; and August 15, 2006, subject to corrections that Steve Puffer or Michael Cann might bring to next meeting.

Voted: 3-0, two abstaining.

It was understood that the minutes of the October 2006, November 2006, and January 2007 meetings, which we have copies of presently, would be brought forward for approval at our March meeting.

2. Old Business: Taylor Street Parking Proposal.

Guilford Mooring reported that the High School people wanted Mattoon Street parking to stay as it is.

Rob reported that he'd walked Taylor street, and found that the problem at the intersection of Taylor and Newell Court could be resolved if the Town established a no parking zone on the south side of Taylor for two car lengths either side of this intersection. It was therefore

Moved: to change our recommendation from "no parking on the south side of Taylor west of Newell Court" to "no parking on the south side of Taylor for two car lengths on either side of the Newell Court intersection."

Voted: 5-0.

3. FY08 Sidewalk Capital Plan

Review of cost estimates for priority new construction. We discussed criteria for sidewalk construction and maintenance, and considered these: pedestrian volume, population density, relation to public transportation, and pedestrian safety. We considered five sites with relation to these criteria: Amity Street from Dana Street to Charles Lane; East Hadley Road, from South Pleasant Street to House #41; East Pleasant Street from Village Park to Eastman Lane; Old Farm Road from Cross Brook to Pine Grove; and South East Street from Colonial Village to House #136.

On the basis of this discussion it was

Moved: To recommend to the JCPC that the proposed projects be given this order of priority: first priority, South East Street from Colonial Village to House #136; second priority, East Hadley Road, from South Pleasant Street to House #41; third priority, East Pleasant Street from Village Park to Eastman Lane. The Amity Street and Old Farm Road projects were not given a priority for this year.

Voted: 5-0

The Committee then took up the topic of sidewalk maintenance. We looked at the sidewalk maintenance projects listed on an Excel spreadsheet supplied by Guilford Mooring. Guilford noted that the list had been sorted by increasing degree of sidewalk degradation, but that the software was designed to characterize wide roads, and that when it was applied to a sidewalk it would over-react to a small area of degradation. Nonetheless, the software gave us, we felt, a useful first cut. Vince suggested that we take a minute to look at the first page of the spreadsheet, given that there was no way the town could afford to go further. Rob suggested that each of us look over this first page and nominate two or three projects that we thought most important. Nine projects were nominated. Discussion, referencing the criteria of pedestrian volume, access to public transportation, and pedestrian safety, reduced the number to four. From this process emerged this motion:

Moved: To recommend to the JCPC that these proposed projects be funded: Triangle Street, east side, from Main to East Pleasant (highest priority); and, with lower but equal priority, Sunderland Road from Montague Road to Pine Street; Lincoln Avenue from North Hadley Road to Fearing Street; and two North Prospect Street projects, both from Amity Street to Hallock Street.

Voted: 5-0.

4. Stop Signs Discussion (postponed)

5. Proposed Paving

Guilford Mooring gave the Committee a spreadsheet titled "Amherst Street Segments." He encouraged the Committee to look at FY 2008 only, as things change so rapidly in the years further out. Looking at this list, Vince recommended that the Shutesbury Road and Fisher Street projects be moved out of FY 08 and that the Stony Hill Road project be moved in. Vince further recommended that Shutesbury Road be given a drainage hold for FY09, and that Sand Hill Road be given a drainage hold for FY08. The Committee agreed with these recommendations,

During this discussion, it became evident that the Committee did not have a good grasp of the ongoing and planned paving projects undertaken by the Town. Without this information as context, it was difficult to make useful recommendations about new paving projects. The Committee asked Guilford Mooring to provide it with a summary list of all ongoing and planned paving projects.

Moved: that, relative to the document titled "Amherst Street Segments," the Committee recommends to the Select Board that the Shutesbury Road and Fisher Street projects be moved out of FY 08 and that the Stony Hill Road project be moved in to FY08. The Committee further recommended that Shutesbury Road be given a drainage hold for FY08, and that Sand Hill Road be given a drainage hold for FY09.

Voted: 5-0

6. Mill Street Bridge

Vince reported talking with inspectors who were evaluating the bridge's condition, Guilford Mooring said that their report will be in in six weeks. He further noted that this would have to be a Mass Highway project, and that the project would not likely soon meet Mass Highway criteria. Vince recommended that we have a plan in place so that when Mass Highway does get involved, we have input on design, sidewalks, and the like. He suggested holding a public hearing during the summer to solicit input from neighbors, and he proposed that a UMass engineering class might take on the design as a class project.

7. South Amherst Common: postponed

8. Henry Street

Guilford Mooring gave us an update on the Henry Street project: 2000 feet of drainage work still to be done this spring; once this is done the paving will begin and the project will be complete.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02. Next meeting will be Tuesday, March 6.

Respectfully submitted----

Charlie Moran, secretary pro tem.